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SAFE AND AN EFFICACIOUS

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SORE-EYES AND EYE-LIDS.



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By THOMAS DAWSON, M. D.

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## ON SORE-EYES AND EYE-LIDS.

**I**T would be altogether foreign to my present design, to expatiate upon the exquisite structure and formation of the human Eye, or to shew how much it conduces to the happiness and felicity of life. Its importance in this respect is known and felt by every one, but is most known and felt by those, who have the misfortune to be totally deprived of so rich a source of enjoyment, or are the immediate sufferers from any defect or distemper in the Organs of Vision.

Equally foreign would it be to my present purpose, to point out the variety of

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diseases

diseases and accidents to which this member, no less ornamental to the human frame, than useful in life, is liable. No one need be told how soon, or by what seemingly trivial circumstances, this source of so much felicity is interrupted, and becomes the seat of intolerable pain and uneasiness. The light itself, which it is so admirably formed to receive without the smallest inconvenience, when in a sound state, doth, when diseased, prove a perpetual occasion of anguish; and the wretched sufferer is constrained to seek a temporary relief in solitary shades and darkness.

Least of all, would I spend my time in recounting its various parts and connections, its different coats, humours, &c. — These are so well known to, and have  
 been

been so accurately described, both by former and later Anatomists, that it would be lost labour to enumerate them, and swell this little tract (for I mean it to be a small one) to an unnecessary bulk, from which I neither seek profit nor honour, but to be as extensively useful in my profession, as I can.

The subject hath not been thought unworthy, of the pens of some of the most able and eminent of the profession. Sir Hans Sloane himself wrote expressly on this head, from whom I borrow my title, and whose plain and simple manner also, I could wish to borrow in the following narrative of a most *efficacious* medicine, &c.



With Sir Hans Sloane, I can say, I have ever been more attentive to facts, than to theory and speculation; and this it was, which induced me to make every possible enquiry, after a medicine for distempered Eyes, which, above fifty years ago, was in the possession of, and daily used by, Dr. Thomas Nettleton, of Halifax in Yorkshire, whose merit as a man and as a physician, exceeds all encomiums.

My enquiries, however, for a length of time were as fruitless, as they were laborious: and though I proceeded in the beaten road of bleeding, blistering, cupping, and in the use of leeches, liniments, washes, &c. it was by no means satisfactory to me. Nor did Sir Hans's famous panacea prove of greater, scarce of equal, efficacy,



efficacy, with a thousand other means in common use. Thus for want of farther lights, I was obliged to wander on for several years, with as little satisfaction to myself, in many instances, as advantage to my patients.

At length, in the year 1763, a near relation of my own, I had almost said fortunately, fortunately at least, for the public and myself, having been a considerable sufferer from sore and inflamed Eyes and Eye-lids (the effects of the small-pox) informed me, she never found so much benefit from any means used for her relief, as from a *yellow* ointment (so it was described) directed for her above thirty years ago, by Dr. Nettleton himself, and with which, after his decease, the  
patient

patient had at times been supplied in the kindest manner by Dr. Key, of Manchester, where she then resided, who was once a diligent and attentive pupil of that gentleman's.

But removing from thence to a considerable distance, her usual supply failed her, and, after many years, an accidental visit to town threw her in my way.

A medical reader, who has ever experienced what it is to be anxious for the good and welfare of a patient (relationship apart) can alone conceive, with how much pleasure I received this intelligence, and the fair prospect it afforded me, of coming at the possession of a remedy, of which I had formed so high an opinion.

Well

Well persuaded of Dr. Key's benevolence, I wrote to him forthwith to favour me with the receipt, which he readily did, adding at the same time, in the most obliging manner, some useful hints relative to his own practice and experience, with respect to this medicine; an extract from which, I take the liberty to set down here in his own, as I cannot use more proper, words, and also the receipt itself.

“ S I R,

“ I am sorry to hear your — Eyes continue troublesome at times. I have known the inflammation run very high, and when that is the case, it is generally useful to bleed in the temporal artery, or in the frontal vein, or if neither of  
them

them can be found, then I generally take the jugular. The temporal artery may be opened, with as much safety as a vein.

Besides the bleeding already mentioned, it is often very useful to scarify both Eyelids, which I have sometimes done with a lancet, and then the following ointment will have a more speedy effect. But when the inflammation is moderate, then the patient may begin with the ointment without any previous bleeding, giving only cooling purges.

There is now a student in physick at Edinburg, who has had a good deal of trouble from his Eyes, and had taken a deal of physick there. I suppose from some of the professors. Being in this place the last summer, I gave him some of this ointment from our Infirmary,

(Dr.

(Dr. Key, I imagine, introduced it there) and he copied the receipt to take it home with him to Warrington.

Before the sessions began, he came hither for some more of ours from the Infirmary : for though he had got some made at Warrington, yet it did not answer so well, when made in a small quantity. He took with him a good quantity, and I had a line from him this winter, informing me, that he had laid aside every other medicine but the ointment, which kept his Eyes in good order.

For a Film in the Eye, I direct to soften the ointment by holding it to the fire, and then taking up some of it upon a fine camel-hair pencil, draw it over the

B

Film



Film twice a day, and it has very good effects, and have seen it put into children's Eyes without their crying.

When there has been an Ulcer in the Cornea, and a Cicatrix formed, that is not to be removed by any means.

#### THE RECEIPT.

℞ Butyr. ℥ viij. Aq. Fort. Comp. Argent. Viv. ā ℥ j. Camphor ℥ ij. Butyro liquefacto & in coagulum denuo tendenti, injice argentum Vivum in Aq. Forti solutum & Camphoram in Olei Olivaram ℥ ij solutem diligenter agitans in mortario marmoreo donec refrixerint, ut f. s. a. Unguent.

In

In English thus :

After the Butter has been melted, and begins to return to a consistence, then is the time to put to it the above-directed ingredients, viz. the solution of Quicksilver and the Camphor dissolved in two ounces of Olive Oil, carefully stirring them in a marble mortar, till they are sufficiently cool to be made into an Ointment.

When this has been long kept, it grows friable through the Aq. Fortis, so that we sometimes put a little more Oil to it. But let it be ever so friable, it will easily soften by being held to the fire.

I wish your's and the health of——

and am, Sir, &c.

*Manchester,*  
*March 1, 1763.*

SAM. KEY."



With regard to the humid Ophthalmy, says M. De St. Yves, I generally make use of the distilled water of camphor, which, if applied in the beginning, prevents all these symptoms. It suffices to put some drops of it into the Eye, three or four times a day, and to hinder the glewing of the Eye-lids, (which is of great consequence) dip a feather in the Collyrium, and glide it betwixt the Eye-lids several times in the Day and in the Night.

Ophthalmic waters, in general, are but of little service; but I have found from my own experience, that by touching them with the lapis infernalis, they cicatrise easily. The violent heat of the caustic must be abated, as soon as they have been touched, by washing the Eye in a  
small

small glass full of warm water. You must above all take care, that the part of the Eye-lid which was cicatrised, may not bear against the globe of the Eye, till the pain is entirely gone off. They may be touched in this manner once or twice a week, till they seem to require no more use of the caustick. Then lay on these places, morning and evening, tutty reduced to a very fine powder. It will cicatrise them.

To the use of the lapis infernalis there are indeed many objections. As that it is too hot and inflammatory, and requires daily to be washed in a glass of warm water. But there can be no such objection to the use of this liniment, being largely blended with a considerable proportion of  
the

the butter, and to the camphor, no less than two ounces of the olive oil is added. And this I have invariably found successful in the highest degree of inflammation, without scarifying, bleeding, blistering, &c. But to every one's own experience I leave it, and there I am ready to rest it.

Mr. Ware, &c. in an ingenious pamphlet on the Ophthalmia, hath sufficiently exploded this practice of using the lapis infernalis, substituting in its stead the following ointment :

℞ Hydrargyri unciam unam Spiritus Nitri unciās duas digere super arenam ut fiat solutio quæ calidissima adhuc misceatur cum axungia porcina liquefactæ & in coagulum denuo tendentis libra una, strenue agitando in mortario marmoreo ut fiat unguentum.

With

With this ointment melted, once in 24 hours, when the patient goes to bed, it is to be rubbed upon the end of the finger carefully, into the edges of the affected Eye-lids. This is something similar to the foregoing receipt.

It gives me great pain to find, such a censure as this passed, where indeed it was by no means due, “ that amidst the very  
 “ considerable improvements which have  
 “ of late been made in the practice of  
 “ surgery, no other outward applications,  
 “ have so much as been *proposed* ; at  
 “ least, any, which seem at all adapted to  
 “ the nature of the disorder, or which  
 “ are supported by any proofs of their  
 “ *utility*.”

F I N I S.

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